

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 25, 2010**

**JUSTICE MARY JANE THEIS TO BECOME NEWEST MEMBER OF  
THE ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT**

The Honorable Mary Jane Theis will take the oath on Tuesday as the newest member of the Illinois Supreme Court, the fourth woman to sit on the state's highest tribunal.

Justice Theis, an Appellate Court judge in Illinois for the past 17 years, will be sworn in by Retired Chief Justice Thomas R. Fitzgerald. Justice Fitzgerald announced his retirement last month and the Supreme Court appointed Justice Theis to fill his vacancy.

Justice Thomas L. Kilbride was elected by his colleagues to become Chief Justice, an appointment which also becomes effective on Tuesday.

Justice Theis' ceremony is scheduled to begin at 3 p.m. October 26 in the ceremonial courtroom on the lower level of the James R. Thompson Center.

Among those who will be speaking at the ceremony will be Attorney General Lisa Madigan; Retired U.S. District Court of Appeals Judge Abner J. Mikva; Illinois Appellate Court Justice Joy V. Cunningham; and Illinois Senate President John Cullerton.

Justice Theis will join Justices Rita B. Garman from the Fourth Judicial District and Anne M. Burke from the First Judicial District to mark the first time in history three women will sit on the Illinois Supreme Court at the same time.

Retired Chief Justice Mary Ann G. McMorrow was the first woman to serve on the Court and the first woman to head a branch of state government in Illinois, serving more than 13 years on the Court, retiring in 2006.

Justice Theis' appointment to the Court is effective October 26, 2010 and terminates December 3, 2012 when the seat will be filled by the November 2012 General Election. The Supreme Court has constitutional authority to fill all judicial vacancies.

**MORE**

## **Justice Theis to be Sworn-In as Supreme Court Justice Add One**

Justice Theis received her *juris doctor* degree in 1974 from the University of San Francisco School of Law.

Following graduation from law school, Justice Theis spent her entire legal career as an assistant Cook County public defender, serving until 1983. During that same year, she began her judicial career as an Associate Judge for the Circuit Court of Cook County and served in that capacity until she was elected a Circuit Judge in 1988.

In 1993, Justice Theis was assigned to the First District Appellate Court, and was subsequently elected to that position in 1994. She has served as presiding justice of the First District Appellate Court's Fifth and Fourth Divisions. She currently serves as presiding justice for the Second Division.

"As a judge for 27 years, I am humbled by the confidence the Illinois Supreme Court has placed in me," said Justice Theis. "The fact is I love being a judge very much. I love the intellectual part of it. But most importantly, I have an opportunity to shape the law that affects the lives of the People of Illinois. Being a judge is a great honor and it is very meaningful to me as a person."

Justice Theis has been very involved in judicial education throughout her career. She has been a member of the Education Committee of the Illinois Judicial Conference since 1996 and served as its chair from 2003-2005. She has also led numerous seminars and programs as part of the continuing judicial education program for Illinois judges. She has also been a member of the Committee on Judicial Conduct for the Judicial Conference of Illinois since 2005 and served as chair of that committee since 2008. In addition, Justice Theis has served as a member of the Illinois Supreme Court Rules Committee since 2005.

Justice Theis has been active in several legal and bar association groups, including the Women's Bar Association of Illinois (since 1974); the Illinois State Bar Association Board of Governors (since 2008); Illinois Judges Association, serving as its president from 1997-1998; founding member and first president of the Illinois Judges Association Foundation; president of the Appellate Lawyers Association from 2006-2007; Board of Managers of the Chicago Bar Association from 1996-1998; and the Illinois Judicial Ethics Committee.

Among the numerous awards that Justice Theis has received for her involvement and commitment in the legal community include the Illinois Judges Association Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004; Catholic Lawyer of the Year in 2002; Celtic Lawyer of the Year in 2002; the Mary Heftel Hooten Award from the Women's Bar Association of Illinois in 1998; and the Access to Justice Award from the Illinois State Bar Association in 1998.

She graduated from Loyola University Chicago in 1971, having obtained her bachelor of arts degree in History.

**MORE**

**Justice Theis to be Sworn-In as Supreme Court Justice  
Add Two**

Chief Justice Fitzgerald's retirement ends a long and distinguished career marked by an abiding care and respect for the fair administration of justice.

"Chief Justice Fitzgerald has led the judiciary and legal profession with integrity, intelligence and grace," said Justice Theis. "His legacy will be a beacon for the members of the bar and the general public for a very long time."

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**(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, press secretary to the Illinois  
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